

Message Text

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ACTION IO-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6817

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UN, UNDRO

SUBJ: 29TH UNGA--SECOND COMMITTEE--ITEM 61(A)

REF: STATE 236802

USUN HAS EXAMINED SUGGESTED SPEECH TO BE GIVEN BY U.S. DEL
WHEN ITEM 61(A) IS TAKEN UP IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE. WE
ARE OF THE OPINION THAT SUGGESTED SPEECH COULD BE IMPROVED
IF IT IS (A)SHORTENED SOMEWHAT: AND (B) IS MORE SPECIFIC
WITH REGARD TO U.S. PROPOSAL.

FOLLOWING IS USUN VERSION OF SPEECH. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S
APPROVAL

1. I HAVE LISTENED WITH BOTH INTEREST AND DEEP CONCERN TO
AMBASSADOR BERKOL'S EXPLANATION OF THE LIMITATIONS AND NEEDS OF HIS
OFFICE IN ATTEMPTING TO PERFORM THE DUTIES ASSIGNED
TO IT BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
I COMMEND HIM FOR HIS EFFORTS AND DEDICATION IN THIS CAUSE.

2. MR. CHAIRMAN, THE SUBJECT WE ARE DEALING WITH TODAY IS ONE THAT
POTENTIALLY AFFECTS HEUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE-ONE THO WHICH WE
ALL SHOULD DEVOTE THE MOSE EARNEST ATTENTION.

3. DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS ALONE, MY GOVERNMENT'S
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RECORDS INDICATE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN 430 NATURAL DISASTERS,

3.5 MILLION DEATHS, 400 MILLION VICTIMS, AND DAMAGE
ESTIMATED AT 11 BILLION DOLLARS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS.

4. DURING THIS PERIOD, DONOR NATIONS AND ORGANIZATION PROVIDED

2.8 BILLION DOLLARS IN EMERGENCY RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

-A CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF WHICH WAS OF THE WRONG TYPE

OR SENT TO THE WRONG PLACE OR SENT AT THE WRONG TIME.

ONE CAN ONLY ASK HOW MUCH THE UNSPEAKABLE HUMAN SUFFERING MIGHT

HAVE BEEN MITIGATED IF WORLD DISASTER RELIEF HAD BEEN BETTER

ORGANIZED.

5. AS A FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROBLEM WE FACE,

FIVE WEEKS AGO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH OTHERS,

WAS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE VICTIMS OF

EIGHT FOREIGN DISASTERS. ON ANOTHER OCCASION ,

WE WERE TRYING TO COPE WITH THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF

27 DISASTERS AT ONE TIME.

6. WHO IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS REALLY AWARE OF THE ENORMITY

OF THIS RPOBLEM WHEN IN 1972 IT CREATED THE UN DISASTER RELIEF

OFFICE AND ASSIGNED TO IT A BRAOD ARRAY OF DISASTER RELIEF AND

PREPAREDNESS RESPONSIBILITIES, WHILE GIVING IT SUCH LIMITED RE-

SOURCES? WE NOW RECOGNIZE-AS DOES UNDRO ITSELF-THAT ITS

LIMITED RESOURCES AND STAFF HAVE BEEN A MAJOR CONSTRAINT IN THE

PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES ASSITNED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PAR-

TICULARLY THE MUCH NEEDED FUNCTION OF DONOR COORDINATION.

7. AS MATTERS NOW STAND, DONOR GOVERNMENTS MUST "FLY BLIND" DUR-

ING MUCH OF A DISASTER EMERGENCY. THEY MAKE ACTION DECISIONS WITH

NO ASSURANCE THAT THEIR AID MAY NOT BE DUPLICATING HELP BEING

SENT BY ANOTHER GOVERNMENT. BY THE SAME TOKEN, ASSUMPTIONS THAT

OTHER DONORS MAY BE MEETING AN IDENTIFIED REQUIREMENT MAY BE IN

ERROR, WITH THE RESULT THAT SERIOUS OMISSIONS MAY OCCUR. AND

SOMETIMES EQUIPMENT AND GOODS SENT ARE NOT WHAT WAS NEEDED.

8. FOR THESE REASONS, MR. CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER

CALLED FOR STRENGTHENING UNDRO WHEN HE SPOKE TO THE GENERAL

ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1974. WHAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD IN

MIND WAS THAT THE NEW INFUSION OF STRENGTH SHOULD BE FOCUSED

PRINCIPALLY ON DEVELOPING UNDRO'S CAPABILITY TO COORDINATE-TO

SERVE AS A WORLD-WIDE CLEARING HOUSE IN COLLECTING AND DISSMEN-

INATING TIME INFORMATION ON DISASTER ASSESSMENT, PRIORITY NEEDS,

AND DONOR ASSISTANCE. IN THE JUDGEMENT OF DISASTER EXPERTS, SUCH

A SERVICE WOULD BE OF INESTIMABLE VALUE BOTH TO COUNTRIES THAT SUFFER

DISASTERS AND TO DONOR COUNTRIES AS WELL. UNDRO IS IN A UNIQUE

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POSITION TO PERFORM THIS ESSENTIAL ROLE, COORDINATING ASSISTANCE
TO DISASTER STRICKEN COUNTRIES FORM GOVERNMENTS, INTERGOVERN-
MENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS.

9. WE PROPOSE, THEREFORE, THAT THIS ASSEMBLY AUTHORIZE THE SECRE-

TARY GENERAL TO UNDERTAKE A MANAGEMENT STUDY, WHICH WE BELIEVE CAN

BE COMPLETED WITHIN A MONTH ON A PRIORITY BASIS, TO DETERMINE

EXACTLY WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENABLE UNDRO TO EFFICIENTLY AND

EFFECTIVELY PERFORM THE FUNCTION OF MOBILIZING AND COORDINATING

DISASTER RELIEF ALONG THE LINES I HAVE JUST DESCRIBED. WE FURTHER PROPOSE THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL BE AUTHORIZED TO PROMPTLY IMPLEMENT THE ACTION PLAN THAT SHOULD RESULT FROM THIS STUDY, AND THAT SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES BE CONTRIBUTED ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS FOR THIS EXPRESS PURPOSE. WE BELIEVE THIS CAN AND SHOULD BE DONE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE CONTINUATION AND POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT OF UNDRO'S ACTIVITIES IN RELATED AREAS, SUCH AS DISASTER PREVENTION, PREDISASTER PLANNING AND TRAINING, WITHIN THE RESOURCES OTHERWISE AVAILABLE TO IT.

10. HENCE, WHILE CONCURRING IN THE GENERAL THINKING BEHIND ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1891, WE PROPOSE AT THIS TIME A MORE CONCERNTRATED CAPABILITY FOCUSED ON COORDINATION. THIS WOULD INCLUDE, AS NECESSARY, PROBABLE INCREASES IN STAFF, COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES FOR A DISASTER INFORMATION CENTER, AND ADEQUATE FUNDS FOR TRAVEL, ESPECIALLY FOR IMMEDIATE ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENT, AND FOR OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES. THE PRECISE NEEDS, OF COURSE, WOULD EVOLVE

FROM THE AFOREMENTIONED MANAGEMENT STUDY.

11. WE SPECIFICALLY PROPOSE THAT THE REQUIRED FUNDING FOR THE FIRST THREE YEARS BE MET FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS, WITH THE METHOD OF ONWARD FINANCING SUBJECT TO REVIEW. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO MAKE A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO SUBSTANTIALLY COVER THE ENTIRE FIRST YEAR'S ADDITIONAL COSTS--THAT IS, FOR 1975. WE WOULD THEN EXPECT TO CONTRIBUTE OUR USUAL FAIR SHARE OF THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED TO MEET THE COSTS FOR THE SUCCEEDING BIENNIAL, AND

WE HOPE OTHERS WOULD CONTRIBUTE THE BALANCE REQUIRED. OUR OFFER IS CONTINGENT, OF COURSE, ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICAL PLAN AND BUDGET, AND ON THE PREMISE THAT THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD BE DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO CREATING THE CLEARING HOUSE AND COORDINATING CAPABILITY THAT IF HAVE DESCRIBED.

12. AT THE PRESENT TIME, MR. CHAIRMAN, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF CONSULTING WITH OTHER DELEGATIONS ON THIS INITIATIVE, AND WE UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTING A PRELIMINARY DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR THEIR STUDY. WE ARE TRYING TO REACH AS MANY AS POSSIBLE, AND WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO GIVE COPIES TO ANY OTHERS WHO MAY BE INTERESTED. AFTER THESE CONSULTATIONS WE EXPECT TO BE IN A POSITION TO PRESENT A RESOLUTION AS A FORMAL PROPOSAL, FOR WHICH WE EARNESTLY HOPE THERE WILL BE WIDE SUPPORT.

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